

# Court to hear child support cases in Vista

■ Officials say  
move will improve  
service for North  
County parents

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VISTA — Many North County parents embroiled in legal disputes over child support no longer will have to drive to downtown San Diego to have their cases heard.

Starting July 7, Superior Court Commissioner Adam Wertheimer will hear child support cases at the Superior Court's North County branch in Vista every Wednesday. It will mark the first time those cases have been heard outside courts in downtown San Diego, said Superior Court Judge Joan Weber, the supervising judge for the courts in North County.

"Folks have been driving all the way down to San Diego to get their child support orders all these years,"

Weber said. Having cases heard in Vista is "really an exciting thing," she said.

The plan to hear child support cases in Vista was a response to the court administration's understanding of the challenges some parents faced in trying to make it to hearings in San Diego, said David Yamasaki, the Superior Court's assistant executive officer who oversees the North County courts.



Joan Weber  
Supervising  
judge

"It's something that I think is going to be a help to the residents of North County," Yamasaki said.

Superior Court Presiding Judge John Einhorn signed an order May 28 stating that family support division cases are to be heard in Vista when

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both parties involved reside in North County, Weber said.

If a child support case already exists but one of the parties wants to change the court's order, the hearing will be scheduled for Vista, said Leslie McNeely, a spokeswoman for the county's Department of Child Support Services.

New child support cases in which both parties live in North County also will be scheduled to be heard in Vista

when they are filed. Those cases still have to be filed with the Department of Child Support Services' office in San Diego, though, McNeely said.

Moving hearings to Vista was the result of collaboration between the Superior Court and the child support services department, McNeely said.

Weber said officials started talking about the move about a year ago, but a lack of available courtroom space posed problems.

"We had no room at the inn," Weber said.

Trailers that used to house courtrooms have been remod-

eled and can be used to provide the needed space for the child support cases to be heard in Vista, Weber said.

Initially, the court is scheduled to hear 10 child support cases on its morning calendar and 10 on its afternoon calendar, but those numbers are expected to more than double in the ensuing weeks, McNeely said.

Yamasaki said a total of about 1,500 existing cases will be moved to Vista for future hearings. Although child support cases will be heard once a week to start, officials plan to expand services in the future, McNeely said.